Rom. 14:17 For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Intro. If I should tell you all about the capture of the murderer of Makamura, his confession of evey detail of the crime, etc., you would prick up your ears to catch every word, for you would consider it news- the latest at that. But if I should announce that there were 130 in sunday school this morning studying about Jesus praying in Gethsemene it would hardly interest you at all, for you would conclude that the lesson was the regular one assigned for this day and the attendance average. It would'nt be news.

And for the same reason the Gospel has largely ceased to be tidings at all and the New Testament has almost ceased to be new.

And yet, the biggest things in life are not the unusual happenings of the day- the crimes and accident that receive front-page headlines-nor even fetes and functions of society or the election returns- or the latest divorce scandal or the base-ball scores of major and minor leagues-

But the centrifugal and centripitial forces that hold this universe together, the rain and the sunshine and the chemical action in the soil that cause all things to grow, the home life of the people-mother and father raising their children and shaping their chaaacters; School with the daily lessons well learned government maintaining law and order, Church ever lift God's children of earth to His throne of grace and teach them how to live righteously, peacefully, joyously.

And the biggest of these is the last mentioned- for even we who possess Christ hardly realize the bigness or the far-reaching influence for good of the saving, pardoning, cleansing, healing power of the Gospel.

When we consider for a little while together the Kingdom of God, I would have you to understand that we handling the most vital of all the things of human life.

I. The Kingdom of God referred to in thetext is not external, but internal.

1. Not eating and drinking, but righteousness
Not form and ceremony, but an indwelling grace.
Not an outward conduct, but an inner spirit and attitude which directs all conduct and actions.

2. Nor is it a selfish, inconsiderate spirit.
The big thing about it is, not that you are saved, but that you so live and act as to be, not a stumbling block in the way of your brother's coming to God, but a magnetic influence drawing your brother to God.
"Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died".
The many things that we do as Xns and many things that we do not do as Xns that keep others out of the kingdom.
When Xns mingle withthe rottenness of the world and cannot be distinguished.
When Xns in their dealings and personal in-influences turn others from God.

A lady once said to Gypsy Smith, "Tell me where I am wrong. I am not a church member but I want to be a Xn. There are moments when I hunger to be a good woman: when I thirst to be an out-and-out Xn, just as my mother used to be. But if I go to church I see the same people there as myself- people I see everywhere else. So far as I can see, the only difference between some of these people and myself is that they take communion and their names are on the church roll, while mine is not. If I go to a dance, they are there. If I go to the races, they are there. Wherever I go I find them. I do not want to get mixed up with that kind of religion. If I get religion at all, my own common sense tells me that I have to try to be like Jesus."

Just as meat was not an evil to Xns, yet the partaking of meat caused some to fall away from Christ, making it necessary for Xns to refrain from eating meant in order not to cause brothers to stumble, there are many things of the world that are not bad in themselves but which when indulged in by Xns cause many to turn away from God, hence Xns should be willing for their brothers'

dake to refrain.

III. What the Kingdom of God is.

1. Righteousness. First of all. Not peace and joy and righteousness. But righteousness first. FIRST- we must get right with God, with ourselves, with our fellow man.

And we cannot get right with ourselves and our fellow men until we are right with God.

Put God where He ought to be in your life. Harmony, reconciliation, righteousness with God brings peace and joy.

Putting God first means giving up self to His will and service. And it is not a sacrifice but a joy and pleasure to one who loves God supremely.

The English sergeant who had arm blown off at Chateau Thierry. Chapmain putting arm on shoulders, remarked, "I am sorry you lost your arm". The sergeant replied, "I did not lose it, I gave it gladly for my country. I only did what any man would do for the land he loves and his dear ones in it."

2. The Kingdom of God is Peace.

a. The highest satisfaction that can come to a man is the consciousness of being right and doing right.

b. That satisfaction to a Xn includes the consciousness of a conduct that does not make it hard for a weaker brother to enter the kingdom, but easy.

A true Xn not only finds peace for himself but makes peace for others.

Compared to helping others into the kingdom of God what do the pleasures of this ~~earth~~ world amount to? What does the gaining of a little money amount to? To be right with God, to have a clear conscience, and to help others get right with God is the greatest human achievement possible and gives the largest possible returns- such peace and joy as the world cannot give nor death rob us of!

Conclusion. Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The gift of the Holy Spirit.

What is the Holu Spirit? The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Love.

"Peace like a river around me does flow".

Do you want this ~~p~~righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit of God? You can have it if you will~~/~~ pay the price. It const something. It cost God everything. Look at Calvary. The little boy with a broken arm. "I was on stilts and fell off,sir."

Many walk on stilts of false pride, selfish ambition and superficial pleasures. They must get dowm off their stilts, not with a broken arm but with a broken heart. They must pass thru Geshesemene before they can reath their Easter morning.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."